

Mary Lou Terrien

From: Lorraine Weckwert <lorrivy@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 9:13 AM
To: Mary Lou Terrien
Subject: Fw: Historic Districts

On Wednesday, February 24, 2016 8:33 AM, Michael Erfourth <er4th1@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Sirs-

Hope you are doing well this morning.

I write to you both today because of the ongoing debate over historic districts.

I live and own 5 commercial buildings in downtown Owosso, MI. Neither of you need to look no further than our my downtown to see the benefits of historic districts and the need for them. In the past few years Owosso has seen an influx of investment by a younger generation. A generation of entrepreneurs and property developers hell bent on restoring Owosso to a vibrant city. Numerous new businesses have opened in historically renovated buildings. In the past 6 months, 7 new businesses have opened. At least that many are slated to open in the next few months. This has not come from the prior generation of property owner who covered up and destroyed facades. This started after Owosso started to implement a historic district on its downtown. The Lebowsky Theater was a \$5MM historic renovation completed by the Owosso Community Players and aided by the fact that this district existed in the past few years. The Wesener Building owned by Dave Acton is being restored from a fire, and brought back to life due to the existence of this district. It would have been far cheaper to tear it down and build a simple structure. The Armory, a project by the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership will benefit from the existence of this district and the credits that it enables. I own 3 buildings myself and am within days of purchasing 2 more. I have started negotiations on 3 others. All of which were previously covered with bad vinyl Windows, false facades or other various abuses that I have either removed or am in process on restoring historically. I do this because I have pride in my town and because it is important for continuity with my neighbors.

All of this with the intent of historically renovating these buildings and recreating what was unwisely lost during the 50's, 60's and 80's when "business" was being streamlined and slick facades of metal or stucco were considered hip or cool. We are not a town that has skyscrapers or high incomes. Fully 50% of our town receives some type of assistance. Investment from individuals and small business is critically important today. The jobs created by businesses that want to come to our downtown are invaluable. As are the construction jobs. The historic district encourages these jobs.

Please support the existing laws and resist the ridiculous notion that these laws aren't supported by property owners. In fact, many of us welcome the existing laws and think the short sighted proposals are nothing more than more politically motivated pandering to special interests. Unlike the people who write these laws, I actually have my own personal money at stake and would be affected by these changes in a negative way in my opinion. Property owners downtown from far off cities or states could again continue with careless and ridiculous renovations. Economically, city's could lose out on many incentives due to the loss of these districts. Historic tax credits, facade grants, etc that

would now be lost. Ending progress in a city like Owosso.

This is exactly what we do NOT need right now. We need to support historic restoration and the incentives these renovations offer to challenged properties. This might not be needed in Rockford or East Grand Rapids where people are wealthy and tenants plentiful. This is not the economic reality in the rest of Michigan and most importantly to me, a city like Owosso.

My own opinion is that a property buyer or owner needs to respect the will of the citizens who have implemented the district. We long ago struck down the antiquated notion that property ownership was a requirement to enact laws. That the will of the people were more important than that of only land owners and kingdoms. I say this, with the knowledge that I am a resident of my town and a commercial property owner. I should not decide the will of the next town over simply because I bought a building somewhere. I made a choice to buy where I bought.

Please share my sentiments with your colleagues in the Senate as well.

Hope you are both well,

Mike Erfourth
Owner, Turnabout Ventures, LLC

Sent from my iPhone